

January 2011

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THE NAVY'S "TOP GATOR"
USS NASSAU (LHA 4)

Gator Times



**New Year,
New Transitions:
Nassau DECOM Underway**

Gator Times



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Captain's Call

Capt. Samuel Norton
Commanding Officer
USS Nassau (LHA 4)



Shipmates,

Welcome back from the holiday leave period. I'm very pleased to see that everyone made it back and that all had the opportunity to enjoy the season with family and friends. That being said, it's back to work and continuing on with NASSAU's decommissioning efforts. The workload for everyone onboard is going to increase as personnel transfer. That means that as the numbers decrease, it's important that we all keep on top of our daily standards so that nothing falls behind.

It's also important to be prepared daily. This means not only the correct uniform in order to be ready for the cold weather but we must be in the right frame of mind while working and standing duty. Remember when on watch, in order not to be tempted

by your personal electronic devices, keep them in your work spaces when you assume the watch.

We are professional Mainers, so we need to continue to maintain the highest possible daily standards. FDICH is a time to get out and check your spaces. Even though the ship is decommissioning, we still need to get out and dispose of trash in the angle irons and keep NASSAU looking good. Take care of the ship just like you take care of your own personal hygiene. I challenge all to make a daily effort to keep NASSAU safe and clean. This will make it easier on all.

Again thanks for doing what you do.

CMC Corner

ITCM(SW/AW) Jeffery Barlow
Senior Enlisted Leader



Shipmates,

We are now full force into the decommissioning process as we are taking materials off the ship left and right. Critical equipment is being given to other ships to help support their missions. All this hard work is essential to achieve our goal on March 31 to say farewell to our mighty warship NASSAU.

Everyday operations and tasks are more difficult than we are used to with operations up and running on the barge and work still left on the ship. Stay diligent and focused for your shipmates as we pull together as one team to get this job accom-

plished. We still have a lot of work to do before mid-March when all spaces should be closed out with only weather decks and passageways left.

By now, the vast majority of the crew has orders and I want to remind everyone to start planning as much as possible to ease into their next commands. Keep charging and remember "One Team, One Fight" so help each other out!

Keep your head on a swivel and cover your six! I will see you about the deckplates!

On the Cover: Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class (SW/AW) Dwayne Todd disassembles a bracket attached to a fuel pipe on USS NASSAU's (LHA 4) Flight Deck. Since Nassau's decommissioning March 31, Nassau's Deck Department is donating the fuel pipes to other ships in Norfolk.
Photo by MC3 Chris Williamson

Nassau Plots Course Towards Decom

Story by MC3(SW) Chris Williamson, USS Nassau Public Affairs

Navigation Department Sailors aboard USS Nassau (LHA 4) are taking steps to prepare Nassau for her decommissioning on March 31, 2011.

Nassau's Navigation Department is comprised of Quartermasters (QM) who are in charge of not only navigation, but the maintenance, correction, and preparation of nautical charts and publications.

A large part of the decommissioning process involves removing nearly everything that can be hand carried on the ship. This means that all the charts aboard Nassau must be deposited of before she is put into reserve status.

"We have to get rid of approximately 20,000 charts," said Navigation Department's leading petty officer, QM1 (SW/AW) Sylvester Johnson. "Most of these charts will go to other commands, while others will simply have to be tossed out. Some of the charts we have however are considered secret and confidential, so those need to be shredded and burned."

QM3 (SW) Daniel Pietruski added that they also have to stop the automatic distribution of charts that are sent to the ship every week, month, and year.

Navigation items and tools such as flags, protractors, compasses, and sextants must be taken off the ship as well.

"All of our flags and tools can easily be given to other commands," said Pietruski. "Our not so well known equipment such as telescopic alidades and azimuth circles need to be taken to one central location on the ship during the decommissioning process."

A telescopic alidade is used to sight in on a distant object and provides angular measurements from that object. The azimuth circle measures the point where a vertical circle through a given body of water intersects the horizon.

When Navigation Department isn't disposing of their equipment, they're consistently out and about



Quartermaster 3rd Class (SW) Daniel Pietruski demonstrates plotting a course onto a coastal chart in USS Nassau's (LHA 4) Chart Room.

keeping the preservation of Nassau up to par, which is also a key element to decommissioning a ship.

"We are painting all of our spaces whether they're inside the skin of the ship or outside," said Johnson. "If there is anything broken, we need to fix that as well."

Although the task of a QM is to steer the ship and apply the helm orders given by the Commanding Officer, Nassau will not be piloted by any of the Navigation Sailors as she leaves her homeport in Norfolk.

"The ship will be going to Texas where she will be in an inactive status," said Pietruski. "We won't be the ones responsible for getting her there though. Once the commissioning pennant is lowered off of the ship in March, everyone onboard, including us, will leave the ship. At that time, the contractors are in charge and will tow her away."

"Nassau will truly be missed," said Johnson. "The crew put a lot of hard work into this ship and kept her preserved for over 31 years. People across the world who served on her will get to see Nassau for the last time, so we're doing our outmost best to finish the decommissioning process by the time the ceremony comes."

Nassau Packs Up Baby Supplies



LS2 (SW/AW) Daniel Shelton places diapers and baby food into a triwall in USS Nassau's (LHA 4) Hangar Bay. The boxes filled with baby supplies will be given to other ships so that they can be prepared for upcoming humanitarian aid.

Story & Photo by MC3(SW) Chris Williamson
USS Nassau Public Affairs

It's a little known fact that U.S. Navy vessels, such as USS Nassau (LHA 4), carry not only supplies and food for Sailors and embarked Marines, but also for babies in times of need and humanitarian relief.

As Logistics Specialist 2nd Class (SW/AW) Daniel Shelton carried boxes of diapers, baby food, and other infant supplies out of the Evac Storeroom and into Nassau's Hangar Bay for decommissioning, he explained that merely providing diapers and food like in Haiti can bridge gaps between cultures.

"Language isn't important when you do this kind of work," said Shelton. "If you possess the human emo-

tion of empathy, you can communicate with anyone from anywhere in the world."

Although a numerous amount of baby supplies were given to infants and families in need in Haiti over a year ago, Shelton and other Nassau Sailors still kept the storeroom stocked in case another tragedy occurred while deployed.

"Participating in humanitarian relief shows the world that we are more than just a military force," said Shelton. "We have feelings too. Going there and simply handing out diapers along with other supplies made the Haitian people greatly appreciative. They may never know what it took to get it to them, but they're so grateful of that gesture and will remember

that somebody cared enough to get down there to get it to them."

In just the course of an hour, Shelton and other Nassau Supply Department Sailors filled three giant boxes to the brim with all of their baby food and formula, and diapers so that other ships can use them.

According to LS1 (SW/AW) Robert Brunell, the Evac Storeroom is considered a special space compared to all the other storerooms aboard Nassau.

"The way our storerooms work, Sailors have to request supplies and run paperwork in order to get what they want," said Brunell. "With the Evac Storeroom, none of that is required. If it's needed, then we immediately help out and give those supplies away."

Chaplain's Corner



A Time for New Orders

This month, many if not most USS NASSAU Sailors talked to detailers and received new orders. As your orders come in, I pray you have happiness and peace about them.

But wherever you go and whatever you do, God has already gone before you and is not only preparing your special ministry and work there, but He's ready to

travel with you every step of the way. There's nowhere you can go where God's love can't be yours for the asking. I surely hope you have found that in your life or that you'll discover it in this next, new chapter of your life that is waiting to be written.

God bless you!—Chaplain Chappell